

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 36482 01 OF 05 091732Z

41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

IGA-02 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 COME-00 IO-13 SIL-01 LAB-04

/111 W

----- 061642

R 091717Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7831

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

USDEL MC NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 36482 01 OF 05 091732Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 PARIS 36482

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, PINT

SUBJECT: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- NOVEMBER L976

SUMMARY: EARLY IN THE MONTH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING MET WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC IN A PRIVATE MEETING THAT MANY HOPED WOULD IRON OUT THEIR PERSONAL DIFFERENCES OR AT LEAST RESULT IN SOME SORT OF ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE LARGEST PARTY COMPOSING THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. THE SUBSTANCE OF THEIR DISCUSSIONS REMAINS A MYSTERY, AND THE AMBIGUITY OF THAT MEETING TYPIFIED THE STATE OF RELATIONS AMONG THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY COALITION DURING THE MONTH.

SEVEN LEGISLATIVE BYELECTIONS WERE HELD AS SIX FORMER GOVERNMENT MINISTERS TRIED TO REGAIN THEIR SEATS IN PARLIAMENT. GAULLISTS AND SOCIALISTS CAME OUT THE RELATIVE WINNERS, AND THE ELECTORAL RESULTS ONLY REINFORCED THE ANXIETIES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE POLITICAL PARTNERS. ECONOMIC INDICATORS CONTINUED TO ADD TO GOVERNMENT WOES, AS THE PRICE INDEX AND THE EXTERNAL TRADE DEFICIT INCREASED, BOTH DESPITE THE IMPOSITION OF A GOVERNMENT PROGRAM WHOSE PRIMARY GOAL - AND THE MEASURE OF CREDIBILITY - IS THE BATTLE AGAINST INFLATION.

WITH THE MOMENTUM WITH THE LEFT OPPOSITION, WHICH CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN A NARROW LEAD IN THE UBIQUITOUS PUBLIC OPINION POLLS, THE MAJORITY PARTIES WERE FACED WITH THE TASK OF RESHAPING AND REVITALIZING PARTY STRUCTURES: THE GAULLISTS LOOKED TO CHIRAC, AROUND WHOM A NEW MOVEMENT WAS TO BE CONSTITUTED IN DECEMBER; THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS TURNED ONCE AGAIN TO INTERIOR MINISTER PONIATOWSKI; AND THE CENTRISTS AND RADICAL SOCIALISTS EACH SOUGHT, IN THEIR OWN WAY, TO TAKE NOT OF THE NEW CHIRAC PHENOMENON. THE NON-UDR MAJORITY PARTIES REMAINED SUSPICIOUS OF CHIRAC'S INTENTIONS, BUT NO ONE COULD DENY THAT HIS BRAND OF DYNAMISM WAS WHAT WOULD BE NEEDED TO COMBAT AND ROLL BACK THE INROADS MADE BY THE OPPOSITION.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 36482 01 OF 05 091732Z

AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF MORE ADVERSE ECONOMIC NEWS, CONTINUED IN-FIGHTING AMONG MAJORITY PARTIES, AND THE MAJORITY'S RELATIVE SETBACK IN THE LEGISLATIVE BYELECTIONS, IT WAS CLEAR 16 MONTHS BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS THAT THE MAJORITY HAD BETTER GET ITS ELECTORAL ACT TOGETHER BEFORE IT BECOMES TOO LATE TO AVOID DISASTER. BUILDING PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AT THE GRASS ROOTS FOR

CAMPAIGN PURPOSES IS THE NAME OF THE GAME BEING PLAYED
RIGHT NOW BY CHIRAC, PONIATOWSKI AND THE OTHER PARTY
LEADERS. WHETHER THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH THEIR OBJECTIVES
WITHOUT A SUICIDAL RUPTURE BETWEEN GISCARD AND CHIRAC
WILL BE THE KEY QUESTION FROM NOW ON. END SUMMARY

1. THE ECONOMIC SETTING: THE SECOND FULL MONTH OF THE
BARRE PLAN GAINED NO KUDOS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, AS THE
PUBLIC CONTINUED TO BE LUKEWARM ABOUT THE PRIME MINIS-
TER'S CALL FOR SELF-SACRIFICE AND AUSTERITY. BUT MORE
SIGNIFICANTLY, NEITHER MANAGEMENT NOR LABOR WAS RALLYING
BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM TO COMBAT INFLATION. IF
THE LEFT OPPOSITION COULD CONTINUE TO CRITICIZE GOVERN-
MENT POLICY AS INEFFECTIVE AND INAPPROPRIATE TO THE REAL
NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY, THEY COULD POINT TO GOVERNMENT
STATISTICS TO SUPPORT THEIR ARGUMENTS. DESPITE A PRO-

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 36482 02 OF 05 091741Z

41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

IGA-02 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 COME-00 IO-13 SIL-01 LAB-04

/111 W

----- 061822

R 091717Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7832

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
DIA WASHDC
USDEL MC NATO BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 36482 02 OF 05 091741Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 05 PARIS 36482

GRAM OF PRICE CONTROLS, THE PRICE INDEX ROSE BY 0.9 PERCENT IN OCTOBER, AND THE EXTERNAL TRADE DEFICIT FOR THAT MONTH WAS ANNOUNCED AT 4.7 BILLION FRANCS. THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO UNDERSCORE ITS ANTI-INFLATION THEME, BUT PERHAPS AS AN INDICATION THAT CHRISTMAS IS AROUND THE CORNER, THE LATEST PUBLIC OPINION POLLS SHOWED THAT WHILE INFLATION CONTINUED TO BE THE PRIMARY CONCERN AMONG THOSE INTERVIEWED, UNEMPLOYMENT WAS BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT PUBLIC CONCERN (30 PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED THOUGHT THAT IT SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY PRE-OCCUPATION OF THE GOVERNMENT AS OPPOSED TO 23 PERCENT IN OCTOBER). AND LURKING IN THE BACKGROUND WAS THE GOVERNMENT WORRY OVER THE POTENTIALLY DISASTROUS EFFECTS THAT A LARGE INCREASE IN OIL PRICES WOULD HAVE ON THE SUCCESS OF THE BARRE PLAN -- AND THE GOVERNMENT'S CHANCES FOR WINNING THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN 1978. FORTUNATELY FOR THE GOVERNMENT, WIDESPREAD DISCONTENT DID NOT MANIFEST ITSELF IN THE FORM OF MAJOR STRIKES OR JOB ACTIONS, AS THE LABOR FRONT REMAINED RELATIVELY CALM DURING THE MONTH.

2. IF THE ECONOMIC BACKDROP SEEMED UNSETTLED, THE POLITICAL SITUATION WAS NO MORE CERTAIN. WITH MOST POLLS STILL SHOWING THAT MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE WOULD VOTE FOR THE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COA-

LITION IF NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WERE HELD
NOW, THE IMPETUS FOR ACTION WAS CLEARLY IN THE MAJORITY
CAMP.

3. PRESIDENT GISCARD MET PRIVATELY WITH JACQUES CHIRAC
FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE LATTER'S RESIGNATION AS
PRIME MINISTER LAST AUGUST. THOSE WHO ANTICIPATED
EITHER A LIMITED RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO MEN OR A
FURTHER DETERIORATION OF PERSONAL RELATIONS WERE DIS-
APPOINTED: NO PRESS COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED AFTER THE
MEETING (PURPORTEDLY AT CHIRAC'S INSISTENCE), AND VERY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 36482 02 OF 05 091741Z

LITTLE HAS LEAKED TO THE PRESS OR OTHER SOURCES AS TO
WHAT ACTUALLY TRANSPIRED DURING THAT MEETING (PARIS
32836). IN FACT, THE AMBIGUITY OF THAT MEETING APTLY
REFLECTED MAJORITY RELATIONS DURING THE MONTH.

4. FIRST CAME THE ELECTIONS: SEVEN LEGISLATIVE ELECT-
IONS WERE HELD OVER A THREE-WEEK PERIOD AS SIX FORMER
GOVERNMENT MINISTERS WERE ATTEMPTING TO REGAIN THEIR
SEATS IN PARLIAMENT (PARIS 34586). DESPITE THE
EXTREMELY LIMITED SCOPE OF THESE BYELECTIONS, MANY
COMMENTATORS WERE BENT ON EXTRAPOLATING RESULTS AND
VOTER "TRENDS" TO PROVIDE A POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR THE
FULL SCALE NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN 1978. ACTUAL RESULTS
WERE MIXED, WITH THE UDR (GAULLISTS) -- INCLUDING
CHIRAC -- AND THE SOCIALISTS SHOWING VOTER GAINS, THE
CENTER PARTIES AND THE PRESIDENT'S OWN INDEPENDENT
REPUBLICAN PARTY DOING RATHER POORLY, AND THE COMMUNISTS
ALSO DECLINING IN THE NUMBER OF VOTES OBTAINED (ALTHOUGH
THEY DID MUCH BETTER IN THE SECOND ROUND RUN-OFFS THAN
THEY DID IN THE FIRST ROUND - AN INDICATION OF SOCIALIST-
COMMUNIST COOPERATION AND A GROWING WILLINGNESS OF MANY
SOCIALIST VOTERS TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNIST CANDIDATES ON
THE SECOND ROUND). WHEN THE DUST HAD SETTLED, FIVE
FORMER MINISTERS HAD BEEN RE-ELECTED (THE SIXTH, AN
IR CANDIDATE, VIEWD AS A RISING STAR IN THE PARTY, WAS
SOUNDLY DEFEATED) AND THE SOCIALISTS HAD GAINED TWO NEW
SEATS. THE RESULTS DID NOT IN ANY WAY AFFECT THE
GOVERNMENT'S COMFORTABLE MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT, BUT
THEY DID OCCASION CONSIDERABLE STOCK-TAKING AMONG THE
LOSERS. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, ALL THE PARTIES FOUND
SOMETHING OPTIMISTIC TO SAY ABOUT THE ELECTION RESULTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 36482 03 OF 05 091742Z

41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

IGA-02 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 COME-00 IO-13 SIL-01 LAB-04

/111 W

----- 061725

R 091717Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7833

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

USDEL MC NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 36482 03 OF 05 091742Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 05 PARIS 36482

5. WILL THE REAL MAJORITY PLEASE STAND UP?" CONCOMITANT WITH THE UDR'S STRONG SHOWING IN THE BY-ELECTIONS, THE PARTY WAS BEGINNING TO SHOW SOME RENEWED SIGNS OF VIGOR. ALL EYES WERE FOCUSSED ON THE PARTY'S EXTRAORDINARY NATIONAL ASSIZES CALLED FOR DECEMBER 5TH, AT WHICH TIME A NEW REGROUPING ("RASSEMBLEMENT") WAS TO BE FORMED AROUND CHIRAC, OSTENSIBLY TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR THE MAJORITY IN PREPARATION FOR THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. IF THERE WERE AN AWARD FOR THE "STAR OF THE MONTH," IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE GONE TO THE UDR'S WONDER BOY. HARDLY A DAY WENT BY WITHOUT SOME NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE REVIEWING YET ANOTHER ASPECT OF CHIRAC'S RETURN TO THE NATIONAL SCENE. PERHAPS THE MOST APOCRYPHAL WAS AN ARTICLE BY J.F. KAHN IN THE "QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS" ENTITLED, "IS CHIRAC DANGEROUS?", A QUESTION THAT WAS BEING ASKED NOT ONLY BY THE LEFT, BUT ALSO AMONG THE UDR'S PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY ALLIES. EARLY IN THE MONTH, AS AN OBVIOUS COUNTER TO CHIRAC, INTERIOR MINISTER PONIA-TOWSKI, THE PRESIDENT'S CLOSE CONFIDANT, CALLED FOR THE CREATION OF ANOTHER REGROUPING AROUND THE CONCEPT OF "DEMOCRATIE FRANCAISE" (TAKING THE TITLE FROM GISCARD'S RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK ON FRENCH SOCIETY), TO BE LED BY PRIME MINISTER RAYMOND BARRE. THE IDEA WAS QUICKLY POOH-POOHED BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MAJORITY (CENTRISTS AND THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS) AND EVEN BY BARRE HIMSELF. NEVERTHELESS, "PONIA'S" PRONOUNCEMENT DID UNDERSCORE THE INCREASING FEAR AMONG MAJORITY ELEMENTS THAT THEY WERE GOING TO BE SUBSUMED OR OVERWHELMED BY A RESURGENT GAULLIST PARTY UNDER CHIRAC'S DIRECTION. THE NON-UDR MAJORITY PARTIES WERE REACTING TO CHIRAC IN A NERVOUS BUT MUTED FASHION: CENTRISTS (MOSTLY CDS) ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF A GROUP TO SUPPORT "DEMOCRATIE FRANCAISE," AN ACTION WHICH PROMISED TO BECOME MERELY A DEBATING SOCIETY WITH LITTLE POLITICAL IMPACT; THANKS TO THE PERSUASIVE RHETORIC OF JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 36482 03 OF 05 091742Z

THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS AT THEIR ANNUAL CONVENTION NIPPED A PRO-CHIRAC MOVEMENT IN THE BUD, BUT DEVELOPED NO NEW INSIGHTS AS TO HOW TO IMPROVE THEIR POLITICAL STOCK; THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS, THE PARTY CLOSEST TO GISCARD, REMAINED IN A SEMI-MORIBUND STATE. IT WAS EVIDENT

THAT GISCARD HIMSELF WAS UNEASY ABOUT THE RAPID AND UNBRIDLED GROWTH OF A POTENTIAL ADVERSARY WITHIN THE MAJORITY.

6. IF THE UDR'S RELATIVELY IMPRESSIVE SHOWING IN THE LEGISLATIVE BY-ELECTIONS AND THE AIR OF ANTICIPATION OF THE DECEMBER NATIONAL ASSIZES CONTRIBUTED TO THE PARTY'S SENSE OF RENEWAL, THEN SEVERAL PARTY ACTIONS WERE INDICATIVE OF THE PARTY'S INCREASED MUSCLE-FLEXING. ESPOUSING THE OLD GAULLIST THEME OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, THE PARTY REFUSED TO SUPPORT THE RATIFICATION OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE IMF ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT AGREED ON IN JAMAICA (PARIS 33335). THIS DECISION, IF MAINTAINED, WOULD SERIOUSLY THREATEN THE PASSAGE OF SUCH A RESOLUTION IN PARLIAMENT. A SECOND BONE OF CONTENTION WAS THE CONTINUING DEBATE OVER UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, ONE OF GISCARD'S "PET PROJECTS," TO WHICH HE HAS ATTACHED HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE. ONCE AGAIN, UDR DEPUTIES WERE CRITICAL OF ANY PLAN WHICH WOULD COMPROMISE FRENCH NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY; CHIRAC'S POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT REMAINS EQUIVOCAL. THE DECISION BY THE UDR TO RUN ITS OWN CANDIDATE IN THE UPCOMING PARIS MAYORALTY ELECTION IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO GISCARD'S PERSONAL CHOICE OF INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH MINISTER D'ORNANO, A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE RI PARTY (PARIS 33814). MORE THAN ANY EVENT DURING THE MONTH, THIS DISPUTE, AND THE PUBLIC AIRING OF DIFFERENCES WHICH ACCOMPANIED IT, SYMBOLIZED THE FRUSTRATION AND SUSPICIONS THAT ENDURE IN RELATIONS AMONG THE MAJORITY PARTIES.

7. COMMENT: SOME OBSERVERS POSITED THAT THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF A "TWO POLES" CAMP WITHIN THE MAJORITY, THE FIRST STEP IN A "DEATH WISH" WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A SPLIT IN THE MAJORITY AND EARLY LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. TWO SOCIALIST DEPUTIES RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THEIR STRA-

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PARIS 36482 03 OF 05 091742Z

TEGY FOR THE UDR WOULD CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS TO BE HELD EITHER NEXT SPRING OR IN THE FALL OF 1977, WHEN THE PRESUMED BENEFITS OF THE BARRE PLAN BEGAN TO TAKE EFFECT. EVEN JUSTICE MINISTER GUICHARD, HIMSELF A GAULLIST "BARON", SAID THAT HE FELT EARLY ELECTIONS WERE LIKELY. DESPITE THESE GLOOMY PREDICTIONS WHICH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 36482 04 OF 05 091742Z

41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

IGA-02 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 COME-00 IO-13 SIL-01 LAB-04

/111 W

----- 061739

R 091717Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7834

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

USDEL MC NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 36482 04 OF 05 091742Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 05 PARIS 36482

SEEM TO REFLECT A TRANSIENT PSYCHOLOGICAL MALAISE RATHER THAN A MORE LOGICAL POLITICAL SCENARIO, EMBASSY CONTINUES TO FEEL THAT EARLY LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS ARE NOT LIKELY. THREE FACTORS WHICH MITIGATE AGAINST EARLY LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS: (A) THERE IS NO CONSTITUTIONAL METHOD FOR OBLIGING THE PRESIDENT TO DISSOLVE THE PARLIAMENT AND CALL AN ELECTION. A VOTE OF CENSURE ONLY REQUIRES HIM TO NAME A NEW GOVERNMENT OR RECONFIRM THE OLD ONE. (B) A PRESIDENT WHO DISSOLVES A PARLIAMENT BEFORE THE END OF ITS CONSTITUTIONAL TERM OF FIVE YEARS CANNOT DISSOLVE THE PARLIAMENT AGAIN FOR A FULL 12 MONTHS -- A DANGEROUS POSITION TO BE IN WHEN THE OPPOSITION STANDS A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING CONTROL. (C) IF THE BARRE PLAN IS IMPLEMENTED AS WRITTEN, FRANCE WILL STILL BE IN A PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AUSTERITY IN MID-1977 -- NOT THE BEST TIME TO HAVE AN ELECTION FROM AN INCUMBENT'S POINT OF VIEW. END COMMENT.

8. WOUNDED BY DECLINING POPULARITY POLLS, AND FACING A MAJOR LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE FROM CHIRAC, GISCARD SPENT PART OF NOVEMBER OUTSIDE OF PARIS SEEKING TO REFORGE SOME OF THE LINKS TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE WHICH HE BUILT AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE BUT WHICH HAVE CONSIDERABLY ATROPHIED IN TWO YEARS. A CABINET MEETING IN LILLE, FOLLOWED BY BUSINESS AND SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS WITH SOCIALIST MAYOR PIERRE MAUROY AND A TOUR OF ALSACE LORRAINE GENERATED HEAVY PUBLICITY, BUT AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, NOT MUCH ENTHUSIASM. MORE SUCH VISITS ARE PLANNED TO OTHER REGIONS IN THE COMING MONTHS TO GIVE GISCARD GREATER EXPOSURE TO PROVINCIAL VOTERS. THE END OF THE MONTH ALSO SAW THE REORGANIZATION OF THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF PONIATOWSKI (PARIS 35901). FOLLOWING THE PARTY'S POOR SHOWING DURING THE MONTH, THE RESTRUCTURING WAS A LONG-OVERDUE AND NECESSARY OVERHAUL DESIGNED, AT THE MINIMUM, TO PREVENT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 36482 04 OF 05 091742Z

A FURTHER DECLINE IN PARTY MORALE.

9. IF THE MAJORITY PARTIES WERE EMBROILED IN INTRA-PARTY AND INTER-PARTY BICKERING AND MUTUAL SUSPICION, THE LEFT OPPOSITION WAS NOT WITHOUT ITS OWN PROBLEMS.

ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING THE PS'S RELATIVELY STRONG SHOWING IN THE LEGISLATIVE BY-ELECTIONS, AND THE CONTINUING PUBLIC OPINION POLLS GIVING THE PS-PC COALITION MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE IF LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WERE HELD NOW, PS FIRST SECRETARY FRANCOIS MITTERRAND HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO PROJECT MORE AND MORE THE IMAGE OF A REASONED GOVERNMENT LEADER (I.E. PRIME MINISTER) RATHER THAN SIMPLY THE LEADER OF THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION. TRYING TO CAPITALIZE ON ITS IMPROVED POSITION IN PUBLIC OPINION POLLS AND ITS RECENT ELECTORAL SUCCESS, THE PS CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT BEFORE DECEMBER 15 OF FIRM LISTS OF UNITED LEFT (PS-PC-MRG) CANDIDATES IN LARGE CITIES (OVER 30,000) FOR NEXT SPRING'S MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. COMMON LISTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DRAWN UP AND ACCEPTED FOR ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF THESE MUNICIPALITIES, BUT THERE WILL BE VERY HARD BARGAINING IN THE REMAINING ONES.

10. PUBLIC OPINION POLLS. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS HAVE BECOME ALMOST A WEEKLY EVENT. RESULTS AND "TRENDS" ARE WIDELY CITED, BUT EVEN WHEN CONDUCTED BY LEADING FIRMS, WE CAUTION AGAINST ACCEPTING THESE ANALYSES AS TOTALLY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 36482 05 OF 05 091748Z

41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

IGA-02 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 COME-00 IO-13 SIL-01 LAB-04

/111 W

----- 061924

R 091717Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7835

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
DIA WASHDC
USDEL MC NATO BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 36482 05 OF 05 091748Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 05 OF 05 PARIS 36482

RELIABLE. IN SEPARATE POLLS, THE TWO LEADING PUBLIC RESEARCH INSTITUTES, IFOP AND SOFRES, RECENTLY CAME TO WIDELY DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS. IN RESPONDING TO SIMILARLY WORDED QUESTIONS ("DO YOU THINK THAT BARRE IS A GOOD PRIME MINISTER?" VS. "ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH BARRE AS PRIME MINISTER?"), 36 PERCENT SAID "YES" TO ONE QUESTION, WHILE IN THE OTHER POLL ONLY 26 PERCENT ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE POLLSTERS WERE SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED BY THE APPARENTLY CONTRADICTORY RESULTS, BUT THAT WILL NOT PRESUMABLY AFFECT EITHER THE NUMBER OR VOLUME OF FUTURE POLLING EFFORTS.

11. TO END ON AN UPBEAT NOTE, EMBASSY CONSIDERS IT ENCOURAGING THAT FRANCE'S MAJOR POLITICAL SPOKESMEN, BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT, CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT TO EMPHASIZE MODERATE THEMES IN THEIR PERIODIC COMMENTARIES. MITTERRAND IS BENDING OVER BACKWARDS TO STRESS THE PRIMARY IMPORTANCE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN FRANCE'S FUTURE SOCIALIST SOCIETY. A COMMUNIST CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT

TELLS PROSPECTIVE VOTERS THAT FRANCE MUST REMAIN IN NATO
TO AVOID BECOMING ANOTHER CZECHOSLOVAKIA. AND CHIRAC
STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF ABOLISHING PRIVILEGE IN
FRENCH SOCIETY. IN SHORT, GISCARD MAY BE LOSING HIS
POPULARITY, BUT HE HAS CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH
THERE IS A PREMIUM ON BEING MODERATE.
RUSH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS36482
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760455-0396
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761258/aaaabxxq.tel
Line Count: 662
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 13
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <09 AUG 2004 by ullricre>; APPROVED <09 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- NOVEMBER L976 SUMMARY: EARLY IN THE MONTH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING MET WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIR AC IN A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006